

REMARKS

In the Office Action of December 4, 2002, the Examiner rejected Applicants' claims 1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 16-18, 31, 33, 33, 39, 43, 44, 47, 48, and 57 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) by Bertagna Patent 5,057,677. The remaining claims are rejected as obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Bertagna in view of Miller, Swartz, Modino, Postrel, Ju, Talati or combination of these secondary references.

In response to the rejection Applicants have amended claim 1, 20, 31, 50, 57, 63, and have added a new claim 64 to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Applicants have carefully considered the rejection and references cited by the Examiner. The above amendments and within Remarks are believed to fully address the rejections set forth in the Office Action.

Applicants' invention is a combination of a portable terminal, having wireless local area network communication capability, with other components to form a novel and versatile tendering station. The Bertagna patent discloses a portable unit used for security and inventory control that communicates with a tendering station, but no further transmission or communication takes place from the tendering station to an external computer over a wireless communication network.

Applicants' invention has two distinct operating modes. When the terminal is removed from the housing, the terminal communicates directly with a central computer over a wireless network. In this mode, a salesman may obtain information for a customer concerning colors in stock, delivery, or other data stored in the computer. When the terminal is connected to the

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housing via a terminal interface, the terminal performs communications functions for the tendering station with a central computer over the wireless network to complete a transaction. In this mode, a salesman may swipe a credit card through a magnetic reader, obtain authorization codes from the credit card companies for purchasing the item via the central computer, and perform other functions necessary to complete a transaction. The amendment to claims 1, 20, 31, 50, and 57 clarifies this distinction.

In Bertagna, the portable transaction monitoring unit communicates with a computing unit, which is located in the merchandise storage cart itself, but no further transmission or communication takes place with an external central computer over a wireless communication network. The absence of communication taking place over a wireless communication network makes Bertagna an improper 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) reference, as each and every element of the invention is not taught.

None of the references suggest using a terminal, having communication capabilities with a central computer external to the tendering station, in two different modes of operation: in one mode, the terminal is removed from the tendering station and is communicating directly with a central computer over a wireless communication network; in the other mode, the terminal is connected to the tendering station, and the terminal performs communications functions for the tendering station with a central computer over the wireless network to complete a transaction. Accordingly, Applicants' independent claims 1, 20, 31, 50, and 57 are not anticipated by the Bertagna Patent and the claims dependent thereon are not rendered obvious by the combination of Bertagna with the other references.

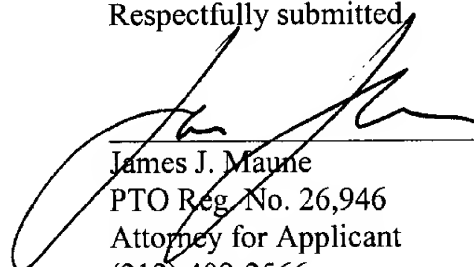
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Claim 63 has been amended to overcome Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a). Bertagna teaches that the function of gaining access to a portable transaction monitoring unit (PTMU) is made available to a user in response to personal information supplied by the user desiring access to the PTMU. In Bertagna however, this is not carried out with varying hierarchical levels of access to information in the system. In the claimed invention, depending on the level of the user, different functions are made available via the terminal. For example, using the claimed invention in a retail establishment, the host processor offers a supervisor greater authorized functions than a cashier. This variation of user functionality is neither disclosed or suggested by Bertagna, and even combined with Modiano's "Vehicle Mounted Cash Dispensing Machine" is not an obvious variation.

New claim 64 is presented for examination.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, favorable reconsideration is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIn the Claims:

Amend the claims as set forth below:

1. (Amended) A tendering station comprising:

a movable housing;

a terminal removeably connected to said housing by a terminal interface for acquiring transaction information, said terminal having a display and a device for communicating information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer, and at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal by said terminal interface for conveying transaction information and related information to or from a user.

20 (Amended) A portable customer service station for facilitating a customer transaction in a shopping facility, said customer service station comprising:

a movable housing;

a handheld terminal removeably connected to said housing by a terminal interface for acquiring transaction information, said terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer, at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information;

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a customer display attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal for displaying the transaction information and related information to a customer; and

a printer device for printing receipts or transaction reports.

31. (Amended) A portable tendering station for facilitating a customer transaction in shopping facility, said tendering station comprising:

a movable housing;

a cradle interface attached to said housing;

a handheld terminal removeably connected to said cradle interface for acquiring transaction information, said terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer, at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said station and in communication with said terminal via said cradle interface for conveying the transaction information and related information to or from a customer, said at least one peripheral device being used to complete said transaction.

50. (Amended) A customer service station for facilitating a customer transaction in a shopping facility, said customer service station comprising:

a housing;

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an interface attached to said housing for receiving and transmitting transaction and related information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said customer service station and coupled to said interface for conveying the transaction and related information to or from a customer, said at least one peripheral device being used to complete said customer transaction.

57. (Amended) system for providing tendering and customer services, comprising:

a host computer for processing transaction data;

a controller coupled to said host computer for communicating the transaction information to and from said host computer;

a wireless communication network coupled to said controller for communicating the transaction information to and from said controller; and

a portable station in communication with said wireless communication network for providing the transaction information to said network, said portable station comprising:

a movable housing;

a terminal removeably connected to said housing by a terminal interface for acquiring the transaction information, said terminal having a display and a device for communicating the information over said wireless communication network to an external central computer, and at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions; and

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at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal by said terminal interface for conveying the transaction information and related information to or from a user.

63. (Amended) In a system wherein a host processor communicates with a plurality of mobile terminals using radio data communication, a method for controlling functions available to terminal users, comprising:

issuing a terminal to a user;

receiving identification data specific to said user on said terminal and communicating said identification data to said host processor;

operating said host processor to hierarchically determine authorized functions to be made available to said user, using said identification data;

communicating a message to said terminal identifying available authorized functions; and

operating said host processor to provide user selected ones of said authorized functions to said terminal.

64. (Added) In a retail establishment having a wireless data communications network, wherein there is provided at least one portable terminal arranged to be connected to a tendering station for completing a transaction, a method of servicing customers, comprising:

operating said portable terminal detached from said tendering station to communicate with a central computer over said wireless network to provide information to a customer;

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attaching said portable terminal to a tendering station to communicate with peripheral devices on said tendering station to process a transaction; and

operating said terminal while attached to said tendering station to communicate transaction data to said central computer over said wireless network.